

SOCIAL PROBLEMS

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

James A. Holstein, Editor
Jodi Rusch, Editorial Coordinator
Cathy Morrell, Administrative Assistant

Stephen L. Franzoi, Associate Editor
Carol A. Archbold, Deputy Editor
Crystal Mueller, Production Editor

To: SSSP Board of Directors
Editorial and Publications Committee
Advisory Editors

From: James A. Holstein, Editor, *Social Problems*

RE: 2003-2004 Annual Editor's Report

Date: 15 July 2004

This report documents the activities of the editorial offices and staff at Marquette University from 1 June 2003 to 31 May 2004.

Operation: The editorial offices at Marquette continue to function efficiently and effectively, thanks to the conscientious professional efforts of the editorial team: Jodi Rush, Editorial Coordinator; Caroline Goyette and Crystal Mueller, Production Editors; Stephen Franzoi, Associate Editor; and Carol Archbold, Deputy Editor. Jodi has built the reviewer data base to include over 4,000 potential reviewers. Approximately 800 of these have been coded for their areas of expertise, and rosters of topic areas have now been assemble. Jodi has also continued to improve the MS Access-based manuscript tracking system, making it more user-friendly. Caroline and Crystal work patiently and professionally with authors to maintain the high quality of writing for *Social Problems*. Steve and Carol are invaluable for their professional expertise and willingness to take on responsibilities any time I toss something their way.

The Marquette offices again operated under budget for the past year.

All issues were delivered to the printer on schedule, but we have experienced shipping problems twice in the past year. On two occasions, issues (November 2003 [50:4] and May 2004 [51:2]) were printed on schedule and portions of the mailing list were mailed on schedule. Due to human error, however, the issues intended for subscribers on the membership lists were not shipped in a timely fashion. Failure to mail the November 2003 issue has been attributed to an oversight at the printer. Failure to mail the May 2004 issue resulted from UC Press's failure to properly transmit the correct mailing list to the printer. The editorial office detected both errors and the issues were promptly mailed. The November 2003 issue was in the hands of subscribers before the end of December 2003 and the May 2004 issue was received by the middle of June 2004.

We have instituted several significant measures to insure that these problems do not recur in the future. UC Press has acknowledged its role in these matters, has accepted responsibility, and has taken appropriate actions to insure prompt future deliveries. UC Press and the editorial offices now have a written protocol for shipping the journal, which includes several checks on the process, and verifications of shipment at each stage of printing

and shipping. Finally, in order to insure delivery of the journal in the month of publication, the production schedule has been advanced by about two weeks. I have every assurance from UC Press that future issues will be delivered on time.

Changes. I have made one minor change in the format for *Social Problems* submissions. The guidelines for “Preparing Manuscripts for *Social Problems*” now specifies that papers should be a maximum of 35 pages (approximately 10,000 words) *plus* references, tables etc. Submissions are seldom less than 35 pages total. We are also attempting to process more manuscripts electronically. We currently solicit an electronic version of each manuscript, and ask reviewers if they would prefer to receive an e-mailed electronic file or the traditional hard copy in the mail. We presently receive about 50 percent of our manuscript reviews via e-mail.

The other significant change is the departure of Caroline Goyette, our former Production Editor. Caroline left *Social Problems* to take a position as Assistant Arts and Entertainment Editor at *The Shepherd Express*, a metropolitan Milwaukee weekly newspaper. While we will sorely miss Caroline’s keen editorial eye and complete professionalism, I think her replacement will prove to be equally capable. Crystal Mueller joined the editorial staff in May and has assumed her responsibilities without a hitch. Crystal is currently a doctoral candidate in English at Marquette University and brings a host of editorial and administrative skills to the job. I thank Caroline, with deep appreciation, for her fine work, and welcome Crystal with every confidence that she will continue the tradition of excellence Caroline established.

Manuscript Traffic, Review Process, and Decisions. The number of manuscripts processed and the disposition of submissions are summarized in the table that follows.

The Marquette office processed 337 submissions in 2003-2004 (not including the “Presidential Address” and submissions for the special section on “Public Scholarship”). This is an increase of 50 percent over the prior year. This is the largest number of submissions received in at least the past decade. I have no compelling explanation for the growth in the submission rate. Typically, the number of submissions rises and falls for no obvious reason, and this may simply be an extreme peak. The relatively quick response time for *Social Problems* reviews may also encourage authors to submit papers. I would anticipate a drop in future submissions as part of a regression to the mean.

The acceptance rate for *Social Problems* this year was 8.5 percent, which closely approximates acceptance rates over the past decade.

The “turn-around” time for manuscripts submitted to the Marquette offices continues to be good. On average, a manuscript undergoing full review receives a decision within nine weeks from submission (*mean*=63.5 days, *median*=57 days). We continue to generate 3.75 reviews per submission. I doubt we will be able to sustain this pace if submissions remain at the current high level.

The editorial office has solicited submissions for four “special sections” to date. The first (“Going Public: Scholarship in Pursuit of Social Justice”) seems to have succeeded. We published four interesting articles by some very prominent scholars. Informal response has been uniformly positive. Three other special sections are currently in progress (“Mental Health and Illness,” “Language, Interaction and Social Problems,” and “Institutional Ethnography”). I’m optimistic that we will fill these sections. I would like to thank the following people for their assistance with the special sections: Allan Horwitz, Teresa Scheid, Jay Turner, Doug Maynard, Tim Diamond, Marjorie DeVault, and Paul Luken.

Finally, I would like to thank the following people for their professional support and cooperation during the past year: Michele Smith Koontz, Administrative Officer of the SSSP, Rebecca Simon, Susanna Tadlock, Cheryl Owen Swope, and Jason Orlovich of UC Press, and Leslie Sanborn of Asterisk Typographics.

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Manuscript Traffic and Editorial Decisions

June 1, 2003 to May 31, 2004

Decision	Original Submissions	Revised Submissions	Total	Percent	Mean Days to Decision
Accept	0	27	27	8.5 %	11.8
R&R /Expedite Review	0	21	21	6.6 %	60.0
Revise & Resubmit	57	7	64	20.2%	65.8
Reject	138	20	158	50.0%	63.1
Deflect	46	0	46	14.6%	8.7
Total Reviewed	241	75	316		51.1
Currently Under Review	14	7	21		
Total Submissions	255	82	337		

Acceptance Rate: 8.5%

Mean Days to Decision (full review): 63.5

Median Days to Decision (full review): 57

Reviews Per Manuscript (for those undergoing full review): 3.75

Editorial Activity

Reviews Solicited: 2145
Reviews: 1053
Reviewer Consent Rate: 49%
Reviewers in Database: 4158 (552 added in 2003-04)